Community Contact

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs

July/August 2008

For and About Local Government Development

Evacuation Planning 2

Protecting your Community from Wildfire 4

Emergency Social Services 5

Manitoba Health and Healthy Living Office of Disaster Management 6

2008 Northern Harvest Forum 7

Municipal Calendar 8

A spring 2008 wildfire came treacherously close to the community of Sherridon, Manitoba, forcing everyone except those fighting the fire to evacuate.

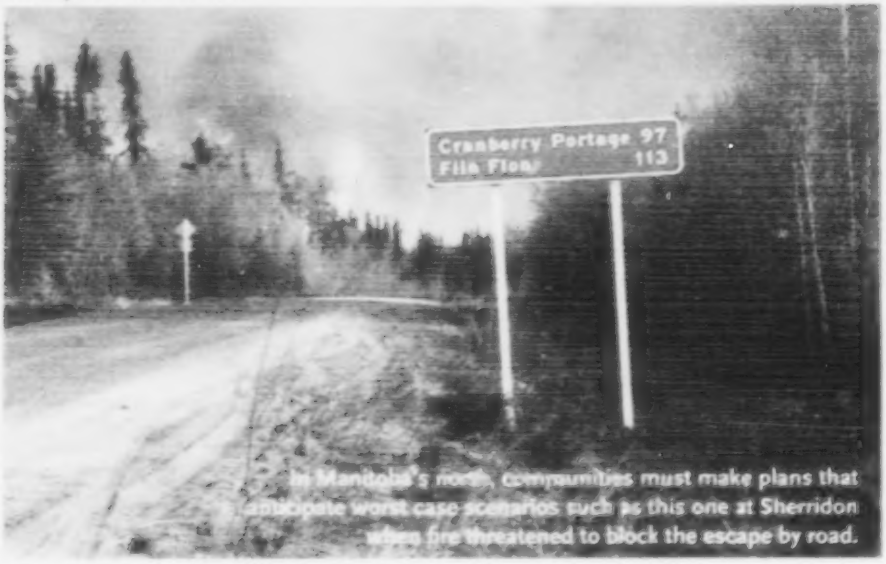
Manitoba

This Issue

Welcome to the July/August 2008 *Community Contact* newsletter.

Evacuation

Several Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) and First Nation communities were evacuated on short notice this past spring because of approaching wildfires or smoke from nearby wildfires. In most cases, communities and residents will receive advance warnings of a need to evacuate, but a fast-approaching wildfire can sometimes make that notice impossible. A community emergency plan that includes an updated evacuation plan will help to ensure safety for residents.



In Manitoba's north, communities must make plans that anticipate worst case scenarios such as this one at Sherridon where fire threatened to block the escape by road.

Smoke or wildfire risk detected

Once a wildfire or smoke has been detected in your area, the following questions should be asked to help decide if community evacuation plan needs to be used:

1. Where is the fire/smoke located?
2. How far is it from the community?
3. What is the current wind direction?
4. Who is at risk?
5. What is the threat to the community (loss of hydro, water supply, communications, road or bridge access)?
6. How soon will the community be in serious danger?
7. Is evacuation required at this time?

Evacuation

Once a risk assessment has been completed a decision on evacuation needs to be made. The following questions need answering:

- Who decides that a community needs to be evacuated?
- Where will the residents go?
- Does your community have hosting agreements with other communities and if so, for how many people?
- How long can the other communities host evacuees?
- Do host communities have facilities for residents with special medical needs?
- How far away is the host community in distance and travel time?
- Who will notify Manitoba Health of any special medical needs of the evacuees?
- What is the total population of the community to be evacuated?
- Does council need to declare a state of emergency or would a local emergency prevention order be enough?
- How will the residents be notified of an evacuation?

Planning

- How many will travel out on their own and who needs transportation?
- What types of transportation are available (car, boat, plane, other)?
- Who arranges for the transportation and what government organizations will provide support if the evacuation needs to be done quickly?
- Do any residents have special medical requirements or other needs and what are they?
- How will the residents be tracked to ensure they have evacuated safely?
- Does your community have a plan for re-entry and how would residents be notified that it is safe to return?

Once a community has made a decision to evacuate, plans are still required for fire teams who remain behind to ensure the safety of the community and also for the return of residents once the wildfire is not a danger to the community anymore.

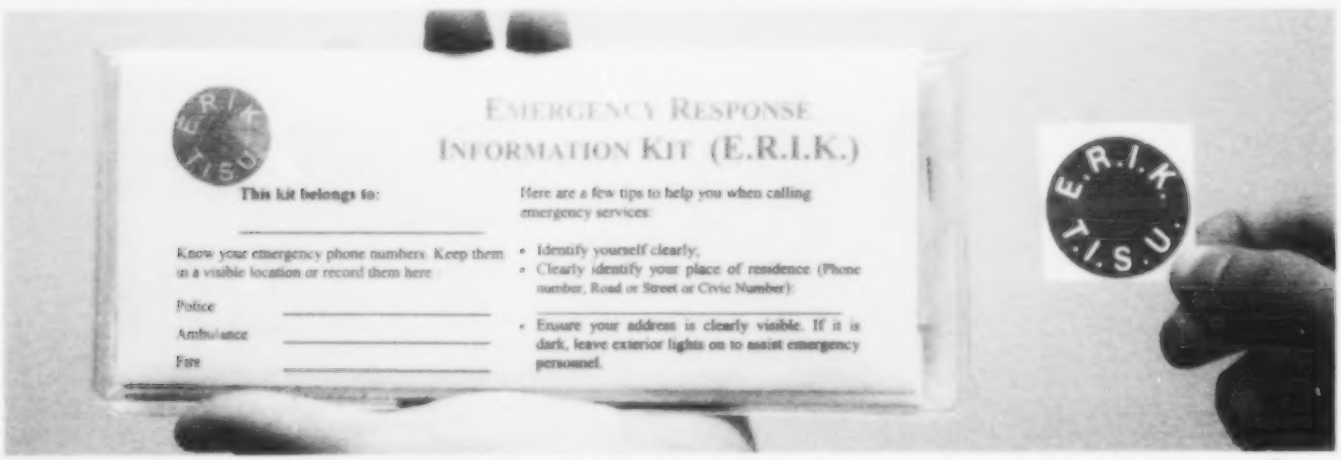
Re-entry and Return

Your community has been evacuated except for a fire team that stayed behind to help protect the homes, what happens next? This topic may not always be covered, but it needs to be included in a community evacuation plan.

- Will there be a fire team staying behind and, if so, how many people?
- Who will be in charge of the fire team?
- How do they communicate and with whom?
- What is their evacuation plan?
- Who makes the decision to return to the community?
- How are residents who choose to stay with family or relatives, informed that it is safe to return?
- What modes of transportation are required to help people returning to the community?
- How and when will people be informed if their homes are damaged or lost in a wildfire?
- Who will be responsible for post fire cleanup?

The mayor and council are responsible for ensuring a community's emergency plan is updated and activated in the event of an emergency. Whether they are involved in actual execution of the emergency plan or not, they are expected to take leadership in ensuring safety for community residents.

A wildfire is a life threatening event. Communities may not have a lot of notice to evacuate, so it is important for all residents to understand they must be ready to leave when notified. Proper planning will help to ensure the safety of a community and its residents. Is your community prepared?


E.R.I.K.
T.I.S.U.
Emergency Response
Information Kit (E.R.I.K.)
This kit belongs to:
Know your emergency phone numbers. Keep them in a visible location or record them here:
Police
Ambulance
Fire
Here are a few tips to help you when calling emergency services:
• Identify yourself clearly;
• Clearly identify your place of residence (Phone number, Road or Street or Civic Number):
• Ensure your address is clearly visible. If it is dark, leave exterior lights on to assist emergency personnel.
E.R.I.K.
T.I.S.U.

Emergency Response Information Kit (E.R.I.K.®)

For people who suffer from chronic illness, live alone, need special care or have trouble communicating, it's a good idea to have a way of quickly letting health professionals know those needs so they can provide the best care possible. Using an Emergency Response Information Kit (E.R.I.K.®) is a great way to do that. It contains a variety of forms that communicate your needs and wishes concerning medical care.

Once your kit is complete, attach it to your refrigerator door and put the E.R.I.K.® sticker on an entrance door where emergency responders will see it. You may also want to take a copy of your kit with you when you are away on a trip, and especially if you are asked to evacuate during an emergency.

Caregivers will quickly understand your medical history and know if you need any specific medications.E.R.I.K.® is an initiative of the Seniors Community Resource Councils in Manitoba. For more information about E.R.I.K.® in Manitoba contact your local regional health authority or visit www.gov.mb.ca/health/rha/contact.html.

Protecting Your Community *from Wildfire*

In late May 2008, a raging fire approached Norway House, Manitoba, causing many residents to be evacuated for their own safety.

A water bomber releases water onto a fire on the outskirts of Norway House, Manitoba.

The 2008 wildfire season in Manitoba started early with several large fires requiring the evacuation of over 2,500 people during May and June. After a couple of summers with relatively few wildfires, this year looks like it might stay busy if conditions in North central and Northern Manitoba remain dry.

Wildfire is natural in any forest or grassland and can start at any place for many reasons. Hot Manitoba summers lead to increased thunderstorm activity and numerous wildfires caused by lightning strikes. Unfortunately, people, not lightning, caused many of the wildfires Manitoba has experienced this year. Because all Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) communities are adjacent to or surrounded by forests or grasslands, extra precautions need to be taken to ensure the safety of the communities and their citizens.

Communities and individuals need to assess potential fire hazards where they live and develop plans to decrease the chances of a wildfire happening. Knowing the fire conditions for your community and surrounding area is important. Community councils can consider restricting open fires and other activities that present potential fire hazards during dry conditions. The better a community is prepared to deal with a wildfire, the less confusion there will be if an evacuation is required.

Other steps to consider:

- Use spark arrestors to prevent sparks from leaving a chimney.
- Cover burning barrels and fire pits with metal screening.
- Do not light or allow fires to continue burning when the wind is strong enough to carry sparks to other combustible material.
- Remove dead and dry brush from areas between homes and forests.
- Ensure access to adequate water supplies and test equipment regularly.
- Ensure community fire departments have the tools and specialized fire equipment such as sprinklers to combat and control a wildfire.
- Consider establishing a firebreak around the community.
- Maintain and update community emergency plans.
- Map all possible evacuation and emergency escape routes.
- Know what resources are available and establish support agreements with neighboring communities.

Emergency Social Services

As part of the province's emergency response system, a Manitoba Family Services and Housing program known as Emergency Social Services (ESS) is designed to match the urgency and intensity of need created by an emergency or a disaster. Family Services and Housing provides ESS at the request of the Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization.

Emergency Social Services provides:
- registration and inquiry
- emergency food
- emergency shelter
- emergency clothing
- personal services
- reception centre management

Municipalities and local authorities are required to have an emergency social services plan as a component of their broader emergency plans. As part of their emergency planning, community leaders have to ensure that the basic and emotional needs of their citizens are met.

If requested, staff from Manitoba Family Services and Housing will be assigned to help a local authority in an emergency. Staff may include social workers, employment and income assistance counsellors, child care co-ordinators, behaviour specialists, finance officers and administrative support.

Emergency social services are provided in partnership with and in support of municipal emergency response teams. Local authorities are responsible for managing an emergency response. When the local authority's capacity to respond to an emergency is exceeded, it should request mutual aid from neighbouring municipalities and, as required, help from the province. If necessary, the province can request federal resources.

Manitoba Family Services and Housing works collaboratively with Partners in Disaster, a coalition of non-government organizations including
- The Canadian Red Cross
- The Salvation Army
- Mennonite Disaster Services
- St. John Ambulance
- The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee

Partners in Disaster supports these services:
- registration and inquiry services
  - registration of evacuees
  - assistance to reunite families
  - response to inquiries
- emergency food services
  - food or meals to those persons without food or food preparation facilities
  - food should be culturally appropriate and sensitive to the dietary needs of the evacuees
- emergency clothing services
  - clothing or emergency covering to help preserve health and modesty until regular sources of supply are available
  - diapers are the most commonly provided clothing item
- emergency shelter services
  - safe, immediate, temporary lodging for evacuees
  - accommodation may be community facilities, private arrangements or hotel/motels
- emergency personal services
  - information on the immediate emergency help available
  - temporary care of unattended children and dependent adults
  - counselling to people with personal problems and needs created or aggravated by the emergency
- reception centre services
  - staff support to one-stop facilities that that are capable of providing:
    - registration and inquiry
    - food services
    - accommodation
    - lodging
    - personal services
- co-ordination of emergency social services in reception centres
- liaison officers and/or on-site response personnel to advise/assist local authorities

Manitoba Family Services and Housing has more than 100 staff trained in emergency social services. The department has a memorandum of agreement with the Salvation Army, and a contract with the Red Cross to train volunteers in registration and inquiry, and provide emergency services on request.

Flash flooding inundated the streets of Brandon in 2005 as heavy rains throughout much of southwest Manitoba washed out many roads and bridges, making travel difficult.

Manitoba Health and Healthy Living Office of Disaster Management

Manitoba Health and Healthy Living Office of Disaster Management (ODM), have a goal to foster safer communities that suffer fewer deaths, physical injuries and emotional distress as a result of disasters.

To do this, the health system needs to provide effective prevention, mitigation and preparedness programs before a disaster, as well as provide co-ordinated response and recovery efforts during and after disasters. The health sector needs to be part of this process because safer communities are healthier, and the health of the population is an important contributing factor to individual and community safety.

To achieve this, the primary mission of the ODM is to make sure the health sector is able to meet the health needs of Manitobans during and after disasters through effective prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery activities. To do this, the ODM works with Manitoba's 11 regional health authorities to help develop and apply their disaster management programs.

One of the most powerful tornadoes ever experienced by Manitobans destroyed property in and around the community of Elie, just west of Winnipeg on June 22, 2007.

During an emergency or disaster, the ODM co-ordinates the health sector's activities with other levels of government, departments, agencies and organizations involved in the response. In the case of forest fire emergencies, the ODM works closely with the Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) and Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) to ensure that residents of affected ANA communities are able to receive health care services if they have to be evacuated.

When the ODM is notified that an ANA community may be evacuated, they in turn notify the regional health authority where the evacuees may be going so they can prepare and put in place the systems required to meet the health needs of the evacuees.

Residents evacuated because of a forest fire are sometimes moved to an area of the province (ex: Winnipeg or Brandon) served by a different regional health authority. The ODM works with all regional health authorities involved, ensuring that evacuees have access to medical care (ex: dialysis) and medications they require.

The ODM and the regional health authorities also work with local and provincial agencies to increase preparedness. This helps communities respond better and recover faster when disasters occur. You can help by preparing yourself — see the E.R.I.K.® information in this newsletter.

For more information visit http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/odm/branch.html or contact the ODM at 204-945-1444, or by e-mail at dms@gov.mb.ca.

Volunteer Fire Fighter Insurance Comes to Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) Community Fire Departments

2008 Northern Harvest Forum

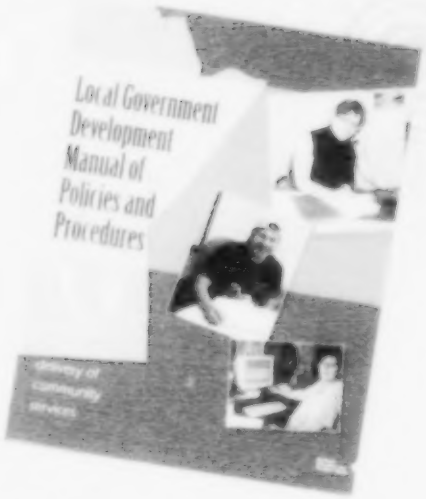
The 2008 Northern Harvest Forum taking place October 16 and 17 in Thompson, Manitoba, will feature hands-on workshops about traditional and current northern food production and preservation. This forum will provide a chance see northern Manitobans display food projects from their communities and learn northern food production skills from people with experience. Workshops include northern livestock (chickens, turkeys and goats), food harvesting and storing techniques (making baby food, canning, pickling, preparing low sugar jams and processing teas). There will also be workshops about gardening techniques, composting and foods produced by schoolchildren.

Other forum activities include the World Food Day banquet scheduled for Thursday, October 16, featuring the Manitoba Food Charter Golden Carrot Awards ceremony that will highlight northern foods and entertainers. The northern farmers market, a trade show and educational displays will be open to the public on Friday, October 17 featuring northern food and craft products, seeds and gardening supplies.

Conference pre-registration is $50 for two days (lunches and snacks provided) and tickets for the dinner are $20. Call Erin Wilcox of the Manitoba Food Charter at 204-679-2934 or 204-679-0144 in Thompson, or e-mail northern@mbfoodcharter.ca, to ask for more information or order a registration package.

The forum is co-ordinated by the Manitoba Food Charter Inc. in partnership with the multi-departmental Northern Healthy Foods Initiative of the Province of Manitoba, the Northern Association of Community Councils, the Bayline Regional Roundtable Inc., Public health Agency of Canada and Heifer International. You are encouraged to visit the Manitoba Food Security website at www.manitobafoodsecurity.ca to learn more about food security initiatives in Manitoba and to share resources with the people involved.

At Island Lake, Charles Harper of Wasagamack First Nation uses a mix of modern materials and traditional methods to preserve meat and fish in a homemade smoker.



Community Inventory Process

Inventory Day – September 10, 2008

Northern Affairs Community councils in Manitoba are required to maintain accurate records of all community physical assets for inventory control and insurance purposes. By September 1 each year, every community council will receive an inventory list of their assets from their regional office of Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA).

Verification of assets listed in this community inventory must be returned by the community council to the regional office by November 1, every year. Failure to verify and submit the inventory report will mean no insurance coverage will exist.

The following forms, found in the *Local Government Development Manual of Policies and Procedures* from ANA, are designed to help communities keep inventory records updated:

- Vehicle Input Form
- Asset Input Form
- Equipment Input Form
- Multiple Equipment Input Form
- Field Definition of Equipment Type
- Inventory Disposal Form

ANA recommends that community councils schedule an inventory day every year on the second Wednesday in September. For 2008, that day is **September 10, 2008**. Mark your calendars and plan to take the day to complete your inventory!

If your community's inventory verification report is not received on time, ANA may hire a contractor to complete it. Costs associated with completing the inventory will be deducted from operation and maintenance funding for the following year.

If you have any questions, please contact your ANA regional office.

Municipal Calendar Monthly Reminder for August/September

August 2008

1 Deadline for receipt of any property tax payments to dept to avoid penalties

15 Deadline for receipt of payment to Receiver General to avoid penalty

18 Follow-up with auditor for review of draft audit

19 Management Maintenance Systems (MMS)
- Isolate lagoon cells

22 Request election officer training, if required, in preparation for October election

31 Deadline for receipt of March 31, 2008 audit

Monthly Tasks
- Submit Municipal Employee Benefits Program (MEBP) form and payment no later than seven working days after the last pay period of this month.
- If applicable, submit to regional office the bi-weekly payrolls for the Building Independence Initiative.

Events
- NACC 38th AGM & Trade show will be held from August 19 – 21 in downtown Winnipeg (Marlborough Hotel).

Fire Prevention
- Council to ensure fire extinguishers inspected monthly and action items highlighted as corrective action from inspections
- Are your training records up to date?

Infrastructure
- Regional review of capital project applications
- Plan infrastructure schedule

September 2008

1 Labour Day
- Deadline for receipt of any property tax payments to dept to avoid penalties
- Council will receive community inventory reports to update in conjunction with the Infrastructure Audit

7 MMS
- Lagoon samples sent out
- Minimum two weeks isolation

10 Inventory day

15 Deadline for receipt of payment to Receiver General to avoid penalty

16 MMS
- Furnaces and heaters services

19 MMS
- Crawlspace vents closed

30 Municipal taxes due

Monthly Tasks
- Council to begin planning process to review and update the Community Management Plan (six month review)
- Submit MEBP form and payment no later than seven working days after the last pay period of this month
- If applicable, submit to regional office the bi-weekly payrolls for the Building Independence Initiative

Events
- Capital Approval Board meets September 23 – 25 in Winnipeg
- Northern Links Recreation and Wellness Workshop will be held September 15-19 at Clear Lake

Fire Prevention
- Council to ensure fire extinguishers inspected monthly and action items highlighted as corrective action from inspections
- Planned inspection to be conducted in conjunction with the infrastructure audit by regional office or energy consultants

Infrastructure
- Infrastructure audit month
- Final capital project applications submitted to Capital Approval Board
- Capital Approval Board meets this month to recommend capital projects
- Send community inventory reports for updating

Community Contact

Paul Doolan, Editor
1680 Ellice Avenue, Bay 8
Winnipeg, MB R3H 0Z2
Ph: 204-945-2161
Toll free: 1-800-282-8069
Fax: 204-948-2389
E-mail: paul.doolan@gov.mb.ca
Web: manitoba.ca/ana

Community council members, community residents and departmental staff are strongly encouraged to submit feedback, comments, questions, suggestions and ideas to the editor.